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Turner Cites 'Intrusion' Risk Ex-CIA Director Faults New Intelligence Order

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Former Central Intelligence Agency director Stansfield Turner said yesterday that President Reagan's new executive order for the intelligence community raises the danger of excessive spying on Americans and invites renewed public suspicion of the CIA.

He said the new decree signed by Reagan last Friday deserved praise for its positive tone and emphasis on good intelligence. But Turner said the easing of various restrictions imposed by the Ford and Carter administrations poses too many risks, both of unwarranted "intrusion into the lives of Americans" and of bad blood with the FBI.

The former CIA director told reporters at a breakfast meeting that last December, before leaving the agency, he had officials there prepare a list of typical operations that might be undertaken "if there were no restrictions" on the clandestine service.

Turner would give no details, but he said there was only one item, out of about 15 suggestions, that struck him as worthwhile.

The Reagan order, which replaces one that Carter promulgated in January of 1978, allows the CIA to use secret means to collect "significant" foreign intelligence from unsuspecting Americans here and abroad.

It will also permit the CIA to undertake covert operations in the United States so long as they are "not intended" to influence U.S. policies, politics, or the press.

Turner said there were instances during his four-year tenure at the CIA when "it would have been convenient" to take a covert action that started abroad and continue it in the United States, but he would prefer to forgo that opportunity rather than overturn the longstanding ban against such operations at home.

"The very fact that you have now permitted it in an executive order engenders suspicions among the public," he said, especially among "the people who think the fillings in their gold teeth were put there by the CIA."

As for the possibility of missteps in the new authority to spy on Americans here and abroad in search of "significant" foreign intelligence, Turner said:

"It's not just that none of us wants to undermine the right of privacy . . . The CIA is not trained to operate within the constraints of American law. The FBI is. You are being unfair to a CIA officer when you put him in that environment where he's more likely to make a mistake."

Turner said he was also disturbed by the Reagan order's elimination of provisions requiring the director of central intelligence (DCI) to get National Security Council clearance for highly sensitive intelligence-collection operations. Turner said this would make it more difficult for the DCI, in turn, to demand to be kept informed of such undertakings himself.

As a result of the Senate investigations of the mid-1970s, Turner said, "I know that some of my predecessors did not know of sensitive operations" that subordinate units were conducting.

The Reagan order was developed after what amounted to consultations with and advice from the Senate and House Intelligence committees, but Turner said he thought this was a practice to be deplored rather than welcomed.

"The Congress is now co-opted," he said. He said if he were a member of Congress who was not a member of one of the intelligence committees, "I'd be furious. They [the committees] ought to be detached from this process."